



January 31, 2014

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Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: California Telehealth Network  
HCP 17211 Denial of Eligibility for 29 Entities

This letter supports the appeal by the California Telehealth Network (CTN) of the denial of 29 provider sites to participate in the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF). The California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) urgently requests that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reverse this decision to allow non-rural healthcare providers that are not Federally Qualified Health Centers or HRSA-designated Community Health Centers to participate consistent with the previous practices implemented under the Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP). CETF supports the participation of these healthcare providers as an integral part of the emerging broadband-enabled healthcare delivery system CTN provides throughout California.

CETF works across all regions and in all corners of California to close the Digital Divide and we are intimately familiar with the most disadvantaged communities. We see daily the many ways in which broadband access transforms lives, especially for low-income neighborhoods and the poorest Californians. That is why CETF helped found CTN and is a major funder, providing both the cash match for the FHCPP and additional operating capital. We know the potential of telehealth to transform healthcare if CTN is robust, comprehensive, and inclusive. While CETF has championed telehealth for rural communities and Tribal Lands as a broadband deployment strategy, we also have actively urged all urban facilities to join CTN because urban medically-underserved neighborhoods look very much like rural medically-underserved when it comes to the availability of quality healthcare and trained providers.

Thus, CETF strongly urges the FCC to move quickly to reinstate the eligibility of these urban healthcare providers consistent with previous RHCPP practices. We strategically support the CTN consortium because of the importance of the participation of both rural and non-rural healthcare providers in the delivery of broadband-enabled healthcare services to improve access, quality and cost-effectiveness. Non-rural healthcare organizations are vital to the sustainability and provision of specialty care and other vital resources to rural communities.

Sincerely,

Sunne Wright McPeak  
President and CEO